



U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

John L. Mica
Chairman

Washington, DC 20515

October 9, 2012

Nick J. Rahall, III
Ranking Member

James W. Coon II, Chief of Staff

James H. Zola, Democrat Chief of Staff

Mr. Don Burgess
Chairman
Lake-Sumter MPO
7375 Powell Road
Wildwood, FL 34785

Dear Don:

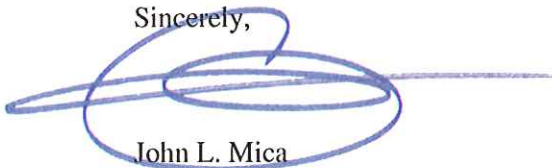
As you may know, a new transportation authorization bill was signed into law earlier this summer. Because this law makes substantial reforms to transportation programs, I wanted to inform you and other interested parties of its impact. This transportation bill - entitled Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) - updates policy, projects and funding distribution for Federal highway, transit and highways safety programs. The bill authorizes two and a quarter years of funding for these programs, finishing the previous fiscal year that ended September 30th and authorizing funding through the next two fiscal years.

As Chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, I was pleased to work with others to ensure that this long overdue measure became law. This landmark legislation made significant changes to a number of transportation programs including changes to funding formulas and highway and transit project eligibility. The bill also cuts bureaucratic red tape and devolves more project approval authority to states so that projects are approved and constructed faster.

I thought it would be helpful to include with this letter a summary of some of the key provisions in MAP-21 that might be of interest to you. Please feel free to contact me or Jim Tymon, Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, at (202) 225-6715 if you have any questions.

With my regards and best wishes, I remain

Sincerely,



John L. Mica
Chairman

Enclosure

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Commrs 5

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Co Fin _____

Other _____

Pub Wks Div _____

Bldg & Dev Div _____

Admin Div _____

Corn Svcs Div _____

Federal Transportation Reauthorization Bill

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)

Transportation Bill Highlights

- Signed into law July 6, 2012.
- Provides \$105 billion over two years (2013 and 2014) for Federal highway, transit, and highway safety programs.
- Does NOT increase the Federal deficit.
- Does NOT increase taxes.
- Does NOT include earmarks.

Streamlining the Project Approval Process

Completing a major highway project can take 15 years, but only a fraction of that time involves actual construction. Most of this time is spent navigating the complex project approval process.

MAP-21 requires U.S. DOT to develop new guidelines and procedures for approving highway projects by January 2013.

These new procedures should result in expedited approvals for thousands of projects.

- **Setting Deadlines:** Beginning in 2013, U.S. DOT will set deadlines for major projects that are bogged down in red tape to make sure all Federal approvals happen within four years. A Federal agency will be penalized for missing any deadlines.
- **Expedited Approvals for Certain Projects:** Changes in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will allow for a faster and simplified approval process (Categorical Exclusions) for projects that do not significantly impact the environment. Beginning in 2013, U.S. DOT will be required to approve the following types of projects under this simplified process:
 - Projects with less than \$5 million in Federal highway funding.
 - Projects within the existing highway right-of-way.
 - Projects being rebuilt after a disaster.

Transportation Enhancements

- Nationwide, approximately \$800 million per year will be available for transportation enhancement activities (now called "Transportation Alternatives").
- This funding can be used for bike paths, sidewalks, rails-to-trails and safe routes to schools projects.
- About half of the funding for transportation enhancements is dedicated for large metropolitan areas (areas with a population over 200,000). The local Metropolitan Planning Organizations for these areas will decide which enhancement projects are constructed with this dedicated funding.
- The balance of enhancement funding will be controlled by State DOTs. State DOTs can either use this funding for enhancement projects or for traditional highway and bridge projects. Local governments can request that State DOTs fund specific enhancement projects in their jurisdiction.
- Each year, approximately \$85 million nationwide is reserved for Recreational Trail projects. However, a State may "opt out" of the requirement to spend funding on these types of projects.
- On August 31, 2012, Florida DOT announced they were opting out of the Recreational Trails requirement. As a result, FDOT now has the flexibility to spend their Recreational Trails funding on highway and bridge projects or on transportation enhancement projects.

Tolling

- MAP-21 ensures that existing toll-free lanes on Interstate highways remain toll-free. If a lane on the Interstate is toll-free today it will remain toll-free.
- States will only be allowed to toll new lanes on Interstate highways. The revenue from those tolls must first go to construction, operation and maintenance of the highway and debt service associated with the project before the revenue can be used for other highway and bridge projects.

TIFIA Loan Program

- MAP-21 increases funding for a transportation loan program called TIFIA (Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act Program) from \$122 million a year to \$1 billion a year.
- This significant increase in funding and a change in law to allow a TIFIA loan to account for 49 percent of the project costs (previously 33%) will allow U.S. DOT to issue about \$17 billion in loans over the next two years.
- State governments, local governments, toll authorities, and public private partnerships are eligible to apply for TIFIA loans.
- Loans are issued based on the creditworthiness of the project and can be used to fund highway, bridge, transit, and other surface transportation projects.

Public Private Partnerships

- MAP-21 requires that U.S. DOT develop best practices for how State and local officials can work with the private sector to develop, finance, construct, and operate transportation projects.
- U.S. DOT is also required to provide technical assistance to States and local officials who are interested in pursuing public private partnerships for transportation projects.